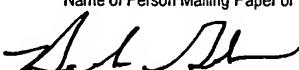


IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No.: To Be Assigned
Applicant(s): Akira TSUBOUCHI, Kiyoshi OKUBO and Yasushi
WATANABE
For: METHOD FOR MANUFACTURING A HOLLOW RACK
SHAFT
Confirmation No.: To Be Assigned
Customer No. 24731
Docket No.: 18733/00045
Filed: Concurrently
Group Art Unit: To Be Assigned
Examiner: To Be Assigned
Prior Application:
 Serial No.: 09/803,560
 Confirmation No.: 7306
 Filed: March 9, 2001
 Group Art Unit: 3726
 Examiner: Marc Quemuel Jimenez

MAIL STOP PATENT APPLICATION
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

EXPRESS MAIL MAILING LABEL NO.: EL 411784203 US DATE OF DEPOSIT: MARCH 11, 2004 I hereby certify that this paper or fee is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service under 37 C.F.R. § 1.10 on the date indicated above and is addressed to MAIL STOP PATENT APPLICATION, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
<hr/> DERRICK GORDON <hr/> Name of Person Mailing Paper or Fee
 <hr/> Signature
<hr/> MARCH 11, 2004 <hr/> Date of Signature

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

The following is a preliminary amendment that is being submitted concurrently
with the filing of a Divisional Application.

Amendments to the Claims are reflected in the listing of claims which begins on page 3 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 5 of this paper.